

KNOX HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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New World Dutch Barns Driving Tour

In Knox, we are fortunate to have eight **New World Dutch Barns**, testament to the engineering ingenuity of our early farmers. Dutch barns are artifacts of the pre-industrial agricultural landscape of eastern New York and New Jersey. They are rapidly disappearing from our rural heritage. More information is available at the Dutch Barn Preservation Society's website, <http://www.dutchbarns.org/>

New World Dutch Barns were built by Dutch and German settlers from the late 1600s through the early 1800s, based on European barns for storing and threshing grain. The barns are fairly easy to recognize due to the distinctive shape and interior structure. If you study the gable end of **Dutch Barn #1 (Shultes-Malcolm)**, you'll see distinctive characteristics to look for:

- high-pitched roof spreading down to short sides
- central wagon entrance (large barn doors)
- smaller (cattle) doors on either side of the wagon doors
- martin (bird) holes high on the gable end



The sturdy barns are nearly square, almost always wider than long, with a high-pitched roof spreading down to short sides. The wagon entrance is on the gable end, usually with smaller doors on either side for separate access by people or farm animals. The main door may have a pentice roof [narrow overhang] above it. There may be martin holes high on the gable ends, to allow birds access to the barn for keeping the insect and rodent populations down.

The distinctive interior framing consists of large anchor beams and columns creating H-frames. The anchor beams may be 12" wide or wider, with a mortise and tenon connection that goes completely through the post and may protrude on the other side. Interior joints are usually wooden, with nails used for siding and the roof.



The center aisle was typically used for threshing grain, either by hand or by horsepower. After the grain was separated from the stock, the top half of the wagon door (Dutch door) would be opened and the grain tossed up. The wind would separate the grain from the chaff. The outer aisles were for animal stalls, workshops, or storage.

As grain production moved west with the expansion of our country, local farmers looked to other sources of income, including dairy, hops, and hay production. They converted the old Dutch barns, and in many cases, added on to them, to meet the changing needs of agriculture.

Please remember that all the Dutch barns are on private property, and some are on working farms. Pull over as far as possible on the shoulder if you stop to take photos. Be careful of poison ivy.

1.



Dutch Barn #1: Shultes-Malcolm Barn, 2233 Helderberg Trail (State Route 443)

From the Saddlehire Homestead, take a right onto Berne-Altamont Road (State Route 156). Take a right onto Rock Road (County Route 254); continue until you come to SR 443 and take a right. Continue to the big white farmhouse with a historic marker out front. The Dutch barn is the last building of the complex on the left.

The **Shultes-Malcolm Barn** was built 1800-1810 by William Shultes. Original size 45' x 60', with a taller English barn added to the back end, possibly 1860-1880. The inner anchor beams measure 21" x 10.5 or 11". In 1867 the farm was purchased by John D. Haverly. Kenneth and Pamela Malcolm bought the farm in 1978. There is a hop house, used for drying and baling hops for the brewing industry, on the other side of the road.

2.



Dutch Barn #2: Dietz-Shell-Anderson Barn, 393 Rock Road (County Route 254)

Go back the way you came on SR 443, taking a left back onto Rock Road. Look for the first house and barns on your right; the large Dutch barn is near the road, immediately after the silo.



The **Dietz-Shell-Anderson Barn** was built around 1827. 48' x 48', center aisle (nave) 25' wide. The pine wood and square rafters were sawn, not hand-hewn. The floor and much of the siding are original, with a fieldstone foundation and a newer metal roof. Adam Dietz owned the farm in 1853, and it remained in the family for three generations, later belonging to Peter Shell and then Steve Anderson.

3.



Dutch Barn #3: Sholtes-Tommell Barn, 142 Rock Road (County Route 254)

Continue on Rock Road until you come to a historic marker about Dutch barns on your left. Look over the marker to see the gable end of the Dutch barn, directly in front of a silo. It has a white pentice (small overhang roof) and new siding with a recent open addition for livestock on the right-hand side.



The **Sholtes-Tommell Barn** was built 1770-1790, originally 45.5' x 43'; current length is 65'. The wood is hand-hewn pine. The scribe marks on the beams indicate that the pieces were fitted by hand, with matching Roman numerals on each of the pieces that fit together. The farm was in the same family for 175 years.

4.



Dutch Barn #4: Gerd Remmers Barn, 106 West Road

Continue briefly on Rock Road, then take a left onto West Road. The second building (with a roof ventilator) on the left is a hop house, used for drying and baling hops for the brewing industry. Mr. Remmers later converted it to a grain mill. The Dutch barn is the last building in the complex on the left; it has a pheasant weathervane.



The **Gerd Remmers Barn** was built 1800-1810, 42' x 50'. The grainery door has hearts on the hinges, a typical decoration for its day. The wagon door is on the gable end, with the ramp (stone bridge) to the second floor added later to the side facing the road. The anchor beams are 14" wide by 16" deep. Unfortunately, a second Dutch barn at 172 West Road was in serious disrepair and was recently taken down by the owners.

5.



Dutch Barn #5: MaryAnn Saddlemire Barn, 177 Becker Road

Continue on West Road, and take a right onto Becker Road. On the right, across from the silos, look through the trees to see the gable end peak of a gray barn behind the hill. The rest of the barn is hard to see from the road.



The **MaryAnn Saddlemire Barn** was built around 1800. It is 40' wide, only one floor and originally just gable doors, with side doors added on later. As the farm converted from grain production to dairy, the barn was added onto for milking.

6.



Dutch Barn #6: Kenneth Saddlemire Barn, 169 Becker Road.

Just after this farm is another farm, again on the right. The Dutch barn is between the house and a horse barn. You are facing the side with an entryway and a ramp (stone bridge), which was added for access to the second floor.



The **Kenneth Saddlemire Barn** was built 1800-1810, 46.5' wide. The anchor beam is hemlock. Until recently, the east gable end had a wagon door, flanked by two cattle doors, and five martin holes above, all with original siding. The barn is being resided (2015), which will contribute to its longevity.

7.



Dutch Barn #7: Brian Whipple Barn, 2548 Berne-Altamont Road (State Route 156)

Continue to the end of Becker Road, then take a right onto Berne-Altamont Road. Continue to Malachi Farms to see the taller barn behind the farm stand.



The **Brian Whipple Barn** has classic Dutch Barn attributes, including central wagon doors, side (cattle) doors, and a pentice overhang. It is currently used for hay storage, with access to the second floor via a ramp (stone bridge) on the back side of the building. The farm was in the Bassler family for many generations, and the Basslers probably built the barn.

8.



Dutch Barn #8: Stephen Rooney Barn, 1605 Thompsons Lake Road (State Route 157).

Take a left from the Whipple Barn and go back along Berne-Altamont Road (SR 156) until you reach the Saddlemire Homestead. From there, continue on SR 156 until you come to Thompsons Lake Road (SR 157). Turn right and continue just past Ketcham Road (on your left). The barn is after the house, on your right.



The **Stephen Rooney Barn** was built around 1820. The gable end has one Dutch door with one cattle door. The ramp (stone bridge) on the side for access to the second floor was added later.

This concludes our driving tour. If you wish to return to the Saddlemire Homestead, go back along State Route 157 and take a left onto State Route 156.

Knox Historical Society would like to thank Allan Deitz, the Dutch Barn Preservation Society, and Linda Hodges for sharing this information with us.

This tour guide was prepared by Jane McLean and John Elberfeld for the Knox Historical Society.

Dutch Barn Map

